

### **ABSTRACT**

An avatar representing a user in a communications session may be used to send to another user an out-of-band communication that conveys information independent of information conveyed directly in the text message sent. The out-of-band information may be  
5 communicated using a change in the avatar appearance or avatar animation as a communication conduit. By way of example, an out-of-band communication may include information about the sender's setting, environment, activity or mood, which is not explicitly communicated and part of a text message exchanged by a sender and a recipient.

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